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(54) Method and device for controlling the processing of an electronic document

Verfahren und Gerät zum Steuern der Verarbeitung eines elektronischen Dokuments

Procédé et dispositif de contrôle de traitement d'un document électronique

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EP 0 973 103 B1

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Description

[0001] The present invention concerns a method and device for controlling the processing of an electronic document. It should be stated here that an electronic document consists of one or more electronic files.

[0002] In the computer systems known at the present time, the peripherals (computer or office machinery for data processing, acquisition or representation) generally have parametrizable operating modes, the parameters of which are fixed:

- either at the time of manufacturer of the peripheral,
- or, by default, by the central unit of the computer system,
- or by a dialogue between the user and this computer system.

[0003] The operating mode used does not then directly take account of the characteristics of the document to be processed and/or of the constraints for processing this document by this peripheral.

[0004] In particular, in the case of a peripheral consisting of a printer, the constraints imposed by the printing of a document including images, for example the constraints of the duration of printing, the restoration of shades or of the quantity of information to be processed, are not directly taken into account by the computer systems in order to fix the printing parameters.

[0005] US 5 767 978 discloses an image segmentation system in which different areas of an image are rendered differently depending on whether the area is determined to be an image region, a pictorial region, or a graphic image. The areas are classified based on edge detection and image intensity calculations.

[0006] US 4 668 995 discloses an image reproduction device that classifies areas of an image either text or image depending on values of pixels within the area.

[0007] "Modern Digital and Analog Communication Systems" by B.P. Lathi and published in 1983 by CBS College Publishing discloses background information about the concept of entropy as the average information in a message and its calculation.

[0008] The present invention sets out to remedy these drawbacks.

[0009] According to a first aspect of the present invention there is provided a method of configuring a printer for processing data of a document, including:

- an entropy determination operation of determining an entropy quantity related to the said document,
- an operation of comparing said entropy quantity with at least one predetermined value, and
- a configuration operation during which the configuration of said printer intended to implement processing of the document is determined taking into account the result of each said comparison.

It should be stated here that :

- the content of a file corresponds to a format of the data which it contains. By way of example, this content may include text, graphics (or drawings) and/or images;
- a pilot configuration concerns both:
 - a pilot of an input/output means, which is configured, and
 - several pilots of such means, which are chosen and possibly which are configured; and
- the approximate methods based on estimations form part of the methods referred to as heuristic in the literature and make reference to decision criteria, methods or principles used for choosing which of various alternatives is the most effective for achieving an aim. A heuristic is a compromise between on the one hand the need to use simple and/or rapid criteria and on the other hand to discriminate the best choice correctly.

[0010] Thus the result of the choice can prove to be ill suited to the processing to be carried out, unlike exact determination methods, which determine a content in a certain manner.

[0011] The reader can refer to the book by Judea Pearl, "*Heuristics, intelligent search strategies for computer problem solving*", published by Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, for more information on the concepts of heuristics and approximate determination.

[0012] It should be noted here that, in the state of the art known at the date of the present invention, a pilot is a software module in a computer system including a processor, a module dedicated to communication with another system having its operating software for performing a set of elementary operations.

[0013] The pilot translates a complex operation required by a high-level software application into a set of elementary

operations which can be executed by the peripheral.

[0014] Configuring a pilot amounts to fixing the value of each parameter of the said translation. These parameters concern, for example, the translation of the character font into a series of dots able to be formed by the printer, or of the document colour palette into a colour palette of the printer.

[0015] Thus, in some embodiments, in order to choose the correct printer configuration:

- the document is analysed in order to determine at least one quantity respectively the symbol scatter belonging to said document, as the entropy,
- an estimation of the content of the file is then deduced therefrom, text, text and image, or images,
- at least one printer suited to this content is determined, which is configured for printing all or part of this document, and
- the printer is configured with the configuration data.

[0016] It should be stated here that the printer configuration concerns all the operating parameters of the printer.

[0017] In the case of the printing of a document, the invention makes it possible:

- to improve the print chain, and
- automatically to choose the correct configuration of this printer.

[0018] According to particular characteristics, the operation of determining a quantity representing symbol scatter includes an entropy determination operation.

[0019] By virtue of these provisions, the quantities considered are easy to determine, and accurately discriminate the content of the document. This is because a document including only text has very low entropy whilst documents including coded images (in particular when the coding includes a so-called "entropic" coding) have very high entropy.

[0020] According to particular characteristics, the method as briefly disclosed above includes an operation of determining parts of the document and, for each of the said parts:

- an entropy determination operation related to the said document part to determine an entropy quantity,
- an operation of comparing each entropy quantity with at least one predetermined value, and
- a configuration determination operation during which the configuration of the printer intended to implement the processing on the said document part is determined taking into account the result of each said comparison.

[0021] By virtue of these provisions, for the processing of each part, for example each page, the choice of the input/output means and/or the configuration of the input/output pilot can be optimised for each part of the document to be processed.

[0022] According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a device for configuring a printer for processing data of a document, comprising:

- a means for determining at least one entropy quantity related to the said document,
- a means of comparing said entropy quantity with at least one predetermined value, and
- a computer peripheral configuration means adapted to configure the printer intended to implement the processing of the document taking into account the result of said comparison.

[0023] An embodiment of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

- Figure 1 depicts a device adapted to implement the present invention, and
- Figure 2 depicts a flow diagram for the operation of the device illustrated in Figure 1.

[0024] In the embodiment described and depicted, the file processing consists of an application for printing data represented by this file.

[0025] Figure 1 depicts the main components of an electronic device 101 implementing the present invention. This device 101 has an architecture which is known in the field of programmable electronic systems, based on the use of components connected together by a bus 102 and of a central unit 100 controlled by a program, a simplified algorithm of which was presented in connection with Figure 2.

[0026] For example, these elements are conjointly associated in a personal computer, of a known type, for example of a type operating with a PENTIUM (registered trade mark) microprocessor 100 from the American company INTEL (registered trade mark), which has at least one random access memory 104, a non-volatile memory 105, a screen 106, a mouse 110 and a keyboard 111.

[0027] An input/output port 103 receives the digital information coming from the user, by means of the keyboard 111, the mouse 110, a touch screen (not shown) or any other communication means, and transmits it, under the control of the central unit 100, to a random access memory RAM 104. In addition, the input/output port 103 transmits, under the control of the central unit 100:

- to one of the printers 107, which is a monochrome laser printer, or 109, which is an ink jet printer using different operating modes, some of which are adapted to monochrome printing and others to polychrome printing, the data frames intended to control the printer selected in order to print each page of the document to be printed, and
- to the screen 106, the data intended to be displayed.

[0028] The random access memory RAM 104, of a known type, contains registers intended to receive parameters, variables, digital data and intermediate processing values, as well as the databases mentioned above.

[0029] The non-volatile memory 105, of a known type, stores the program which enables the device and, in particular, the central unit 100, to operate. The central unit 100, of a known type, for example consisting of a microcontroller, controls the operation of the principal components of the information transmission device.

[0030] In Figure 2, operations and tests successively performed by the central unit 100 can be seen.

[0031] During an operation 201, the central unit initialises the device illustrated in Figure 1, by implementing, for example, the known procedures for starting up the WINDOWS 95 (registered trade mark) operating system.

[0032] During an operation 202, the user enters an instruction for printing a file "file" stored in the non-volatile memory 105, using the mouse 110 or keyboard 111.

[0033] During an operation 203, the central unit 100 breaks the document down into pages to be printed. To this end, the central unit 100 accesses a segment of the file "file" where this information is arranged, or, according to a variant, opens an application able to enable said file to be printed, does the page makeup of said file, and collects the number of pages determined by said operation.

[0034] During an operation 204, the central unit 100 takes a following page into consideration. During the first iteration of operation 204, the first page of the document is taken into consideration.

[0035] During an operation 205, the central unit 100 determines a quantity representing the symbol scatter in the page under consideration.

[0036] To this end, the central unit 100 determines, taking into account the bytes which represent the symbols in the document, the entropy of the page under consideration, in the following manner:

H is the negative of the sum, for i from 0 to 255, of the products of the rate of appearance of the symbol represented by the byte i , in the page under consideration, and the logarithm to the base 2 of this rate.

[0037] It should be stated here that the rate of appearance of a symbol represented by the byte i , appearing N_i times in a page including N symbols, is equal to N_i/N .

[0038] During a test 206, the central unit 100 determines whether or not the said entropy is greater than a first threshold H_1 . In the present case $H_1 = 6$.

[0039] When the result of the test 206 is positive, during a test 207, the central unit 100 determines whether or not the said entropy is greater than a second threshold H_2 . In the present case $H_2 = 7$.

[0040] When the result of the test 206 is negative, the page under consideration is allocated a characterisation "text", during an operation 215.

[0041] When the result of the test 207 is negative, the page under consideration is allocated a characterisation "text and image" during an operation 208.

[0042] When the result of test 207 is positive, the page under consideration is allocated a characterisation "image", during an operation 209.

[0043] This is because the inventors discovered that the entropy represents the content of a document, text or image.

[0044] By way of example, the following table gives a measurement of entropy for documents which are the most usual at the date of filing of the present patent application. In this table the words WORD and POWERPOINT are registered trade marks.

DOCUMENT	ENTROPY
Text (WORD ©)	3.2 bits/byte
Text and graphics (POWERPOINT©)	3.9 bits/byte
Text and image (POWERPOINT©)	6.4 bits/byte
GIF image (in a POWERPOINT© document in POWERPOINT © format)	7.2 bits/byte

(continued)

	DOCUMENT	ENTROPY
	TIFF image	7.8 bits/byte
5	JPEG image	7.9 bits/byte

[0045] The content thus determined is stored in the register "*content*" of the random access memory 104.

[0046] In order to determine the values given above, the inventors used the following computer configuration:

- 10
- a so-called "IBM PC compatible" computer having an INTEL PENTIUM processor, with a 100 megahertz clock (IBM, INTEL and PENTIUM are registered trade marks), and a 16 megabyte random access memory RAM,
 - using the WINDOWS 95 operating system sold by MICROSOFT (WINDOWS, WINDOWS 95 and MICROSOFT are registered trade marks), and
 - sets of test documents commonly referred to as "benchmarks".
- 15

[0047] Then, the choice of the printer best suited to the printing of the assumed content of the file is made, operation 210, and the pilot of this printer is configured, operation 211, taking account of the content of the file "*file*". To this end, when each printer is installed, a question is posed to the user so that the latter indicates, according to known procedures for dialoging with the device, which printer and which printer configuration is most suited to each document content.

20 [0048] Next, the relevant page of the document is printed by the said printer in said configuration.

[0049] Next, during test 212, the central unit 100 determines whether or not the last page has been considered. When the result of test 212 is positive, operation 202 is reiterated. When the result of test 212 is negative, operation 204 is reiterated.

25 [0050] According to a first variant, not shown, a single threshold is used and the content "*text and image*" is not determined. This variant is suited particularly to the printing of document with a printer which does not have a configuration especially adapted to the "*mixture of text and image*" mode.

According to a second variant, not shown, more than two thresholds are used for associating a document content with each operating mode of a peripheral, for example with different data compression software packages, in order to determine the presence of sounds, colours, etc.

30 [0051] According to a third variant, not shown, the determination of the content does not only take account of the value of the entropy but also of at least one other index.

Claims

- 35
1. A Method of configuring a printer for processing data of a document, **characterized in that** it includes:
 - an entropy determination operation of determining an entropy quantity related to the said document (205),
 - an operation of comparing said entropy quantity with at least one predetermined value (206, 207), and
 - 40 - a configuration operation (210, 211) during which the configuration of said printer intended to implement processing of the document is determined taking into account the result of each said comparison.
 2. A Method according to claim 1, **characterized in that** during said entropy determination operation (205), said quantity representing entropy is equal to the negative of the sum, for *i* from 0 to 255, of the products of the rate of appearance of the symbol represented by the byte *i* in the page under consideration, and the logarithm to the base 2 of this rate.
 - 45 3. A Method according to claims 1 or 2, **characterized in that** it includes an operation of determining parts of the document (203) and, for each of the said parts:
 - an entropy determination operation related to the said document part to determine an entropy quantity (205),
 - an operation of comparing each entropy quantity with at least one predetermined value (206, 207), and
 - a configuration determination operation during which the configuration of the printer intended to implement the processing on the said document part (210, 211) is determined taking into account the result of each said comparison.
 - 50
 - 55
 4. A Device for configuring a printer for processing data of a document, **characterized in that** it includes:

- a means for determining at least one entropy quantity related to the said document (100, 104, 105),
- a means of comparing said entropy quantity with at least one predetermined value (100, 104, 105), and
- a computer peripheral configuration means adapted to configure the printer intended to implement the processing of the document (100, 104, 105) taking into account the result of said comparison.

- 5 5. A Device according to claim 4, **characterized in that** the means of determining a quantity representing entropy (100, 104, 105) is adapted so that the said quantity representing entropy is equal to the negative of the sum, for i from 0 to 255, of the products of the rate of appearance of the symbol represented by the byte i , in the page under consideration and the logarithm to the base 2 of this rate.
- 10 6. A Device according to any one of claims 4 and 5, **characterized in that** it has means of determining parts of the document (100, 104, 105), the means of determining at least one quantity representing entropy relating to said document being adapted to determine entropy quantities for each part of the document, the comparison means being adapted to compare each entropy quantity of each part of the document with at least one predetermined value.
- 15 7. A Device according to claim 6, **characterized in that** the configuration determination means is adapted, for each part of the document, to determine the configuration of the printer intended for implementing the processing on said part of the document taking into account the result of each said comparison concerning said document part.
- 20 8. A Memory designed to be read by a data processing system, **characterized in that** it carries program instructions whose execution by said processing system implements the method of configuring a computer according to any one of claims 1 to 3.
- 25 9. A Computer program on a data medium, **characterized in that** it comprises computer program instructions for performing the method of configuring a printer according to any one of claims 1 to 3, when said data medium is loaded into a computer.

Patentansprüche

- 30 1. Verfahren des Konfigurierens eines Druckers zum Verarbeiten von Daten eines Dokuments, **gekennzeichnet durch:**
 - 35 einen Entropiebestimmungsvorgang des Bestimmens (205) eines auf das Dokument bezogenen Entropiebetrags,
 - einen Vorgang des Vergleichens des Entropiebetrags mit zumindest einem vorbestimmten Wert (206, 207), und
 - einen Konfigurationsvorgang (210, 211), während dessen die Konfiguration des Druckers, die vorgesehen ist, um eine Verarbeitung des Dokuments zu implementieren, unter Berücksichtigung des Ergebnisses des Vergleichs bestimmt wird.
- 40 2. Verfahren gemäß Anspruch 1, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** während des Entropiebestimmungsvorgangs (205) der die Entropie darstellende Betrag gleich der negativen Summe, für i von 0 bis 255, der Produkte der Erscheinungsrates des durch das Byte i dargestellten Symbols in der betrachteten Seite und des Logarithmus zur Basis 2 dieser Rate ist.
- 45 3. Verfahren gemäß Anspruch 1 oder 2, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** es einen Vorgang des Bestimmens (203) von Teilen des Dokuments enthält, und für jeden der Teile enthält:
 - 50 einen Entropiebestimmungsvorgang, der auf den Dokumententeil bezogen ist, um einen Entropiebetrag zu bestimmen (205),
 - einen Vorgang des Vergleichens eines jeden Entropiebetrags mit zumindest einem vorbestimmten Wert (206, 207), und
 - einen Konfigurationsbestimmungsvorgang, während dessen die Konfiguration des Druckers, die vorgesehen ist, die Verarbeitung bezüglich des Dokumentenabschnitts zu implementieren (201, 211), unter Berücksichtigung
 - 55 des Ergebnisses eines jeden Vergleichs bestimmt wird.
4. Vorrichtung zum Konfigurieren eines Druckers zum Verarbeiten von Daten eines Dokuments, **gekennzeichnet durch:**

eine Einrichtung zum Bestimmen zumindest eines auf das Dokument bezogenen Entropiebetrags (100, 104, 105),
eine Einrichtung des Vergleichens des Entropiebetrags mit zumindest einem vorbestimmten Wert (100, 104, 105), und
eine Computerperipheriekonfigurationseinrichtung, die angepasst ist, den Drucker, der vorgesehen ist, um die Verarbeitung des Dokuments zu implementieren (100, 104, 105), unter Berücksichtigung des Ergebnisses des Vergleichs zu konfigurieren.

5. Vorrichtung gemäß Anspruch 4, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Einrichtung des Bestimmens eines Entropie darstellenden Betrags (100, 104, 105) derart angepasst ist, dass der die Entropie darstellende Betrag gleich der negativen Summe, für i von 0 bis 255, der Produkte der Erscheinungsrates des durch das Byte i dargestellten Symbols in der betrachteten Seite und des Logarithmus zur Basis 2 dieser Rate ist.
6. Vorrichtung gemäß einem der Ansprüche 4 oder 5, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** sie eine Einrichtung des Bestimmens von Teilen des Dokuments aufweist (100, 104, 105), wobei die Einrichtung des Bestimmens zumindest eines Betrags, der eine auf das Dokument bezogene Entropie darstellt, angepasst ist, Entropiebeiträge für jeden Teil des Dokuments zu bestimmen, wobei die Vergleichseinrichtung angepasst ist, einen jeden Entropiebetrag eines jeden Teils des Dokuments mit zumindest einem vorbestimmten Wert zu vergleichen.
7. Vorrichtung gemäß Anspruch 6, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** die Konfigurationsbestimmungseinrichtung angepasst ist, für jeden Teil des Dokuments die Konfiguration des Druckers, der zur Implementierung der Verarbeitung des Teils des Dokuments vorgesehen ist, unter Berücksichtigung des Ergebnisses eines jeden den Dokumententeil betreffenden Vergleichs zu bestimmen.
8. Speicher, der ausgelegt ist, durch ein datenverarbeitungssystem gelesen zu werden, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** er Programmanweisungen führt, deren Ausführung durch das Verarbeitungssystem das Verfahren des Konfigurierens eines Computers gemäß einem der Ansprüche bis 3 implementiert.
9. Computerprogramm auf einem Datenmedium, **dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass** es Computerprogrammanweisungen zum Durchführen des Verfahrens des Konfigurierens eines Druckers gemäß einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 3 umfasst, wenn das Datenmedium in einen Computer geladene wird.

Revendications

1. Procédé de configuration d'une imprimante pour le traitement de données d'un document, **caractérisé en ce qu'il** comprend :
 - une opération de détermination d'entropie consistant à déterminer une grandeur d'entropie associée audit document (205),
 - une opération de comparaison de ladite grandeur d'entropie à au moins une valeur prédéterminée (206, 207), et
 - une opération de configuration (210, 211) pendant laquelle la configuration de ladite imprimante prévue pour exécuter le traitement du document est déterminée en tenant compte du résultat de chaque comparaison.
2. Procédé selon la revendication 1, **caractérisé en ce que**, au cours de ladite opération de détermination d'entropie (205), ladite grandeur représentant une entropie est égale au négatif de la somme, pour i allant de 0 à 255, des produits du taux d'apparition du symbole représenté par l'octet i dans la page considérée, et du logarithme à base 2 de ce taux.
3. Procédé selon l'une des revendications 1 et 2, **caractérisé en ce qu'il** comprend une opération de détermination de parties du document (203) et, pour chacune desdites parties :
 - une opération de détermination d'entropie associée à ladite partie du document pour déterminer une grandeur d'entropie (205),
 - une opération de comparaison de chaque grandeur d'entropie à au moins une valeur prédéterminée (206, 207), et
 - une opération de détermination de configuration pendant laquelle la configuration de l'imprimante prévue pour exécuter le traitement sur ladite partie de document (210, 211) est déterminée en tenant compte du résultat de

chaque comparaison.

4. Dispositif pour configurer une imprimante pour le traitement de données d'un document, **caractérisé en ce qu'il** comporte :

- un moyen pour déterminer au moins une grandeur d'entropie liée audit document (100, 104, 105),
- un moyen de comparaison de ladite grandeur d'entropie à au moins une valeur prédéterminée (100, 104, 105), et
- un moyen de configuration de périphérique d'ordinateur adapté à configurer l'imprimante prévue pour exécuter le traitement du document (100, 104, 105) en tenant compte du résultat de ladite comparaison.

5. Dispositif selon la revendication 4, **caractérisé en ce que** le moyen de détermination d'une grandeur représentant une entropie (100, 104, 105) est adapté de manière à ce que ladite grandeur représentant une entropie soit égale au négatif de la somme, pour i allant de 0 à 255, des produits du taux d'apparition du symbole représenté par l'octet i , dans la page considérée, et du logarithme à base 2 de ce taux.

6. Dispositif selon l'une quelconque des revendications 4 et 5, **caractérisé en ce qu'il** comporte un moyen de détermination de parties du document (100, 104, 105), le moyen de détermination d'au moins une grandeur représentant une entropie associée audit document étant adapté à déterminer des grandeurs d'entropie pour chaque partie du document, le moyen de comparaison étant adapté à comparer chaque grandeur d'entropie de chaque partie du document à au moins une valeur prédéterminée.

7. Dispositif selon la revendication 6, **caractérisé en ce que** le moyen de détermination de configuration est adapté, pour chaque partie du document, à déterminer la configuration de l'imprimante prévue pour exécuter le traitement sur ladite partie du document en tenant compte du résultat de chaque comparaison concernant ladite partie du document.

8. Mémoire conçue pour être lue par un système de traitement de données, **caractérisée en ce qu'elle** comporte des instructions de programme dont l'exécution par ledit système de traitement met en oeuvre le procédé de configuration d'un ordinateur selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 3.

9. Programme d'ordinateur sur un support de données, **caractérisé en ce qu'il** comporte des instructions de programme d'ordinateur pour mettre en oeuvre le procédé de configuration d'une imprimante selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 3, lorsque ledit support de données est chargé dans un ordinateur.

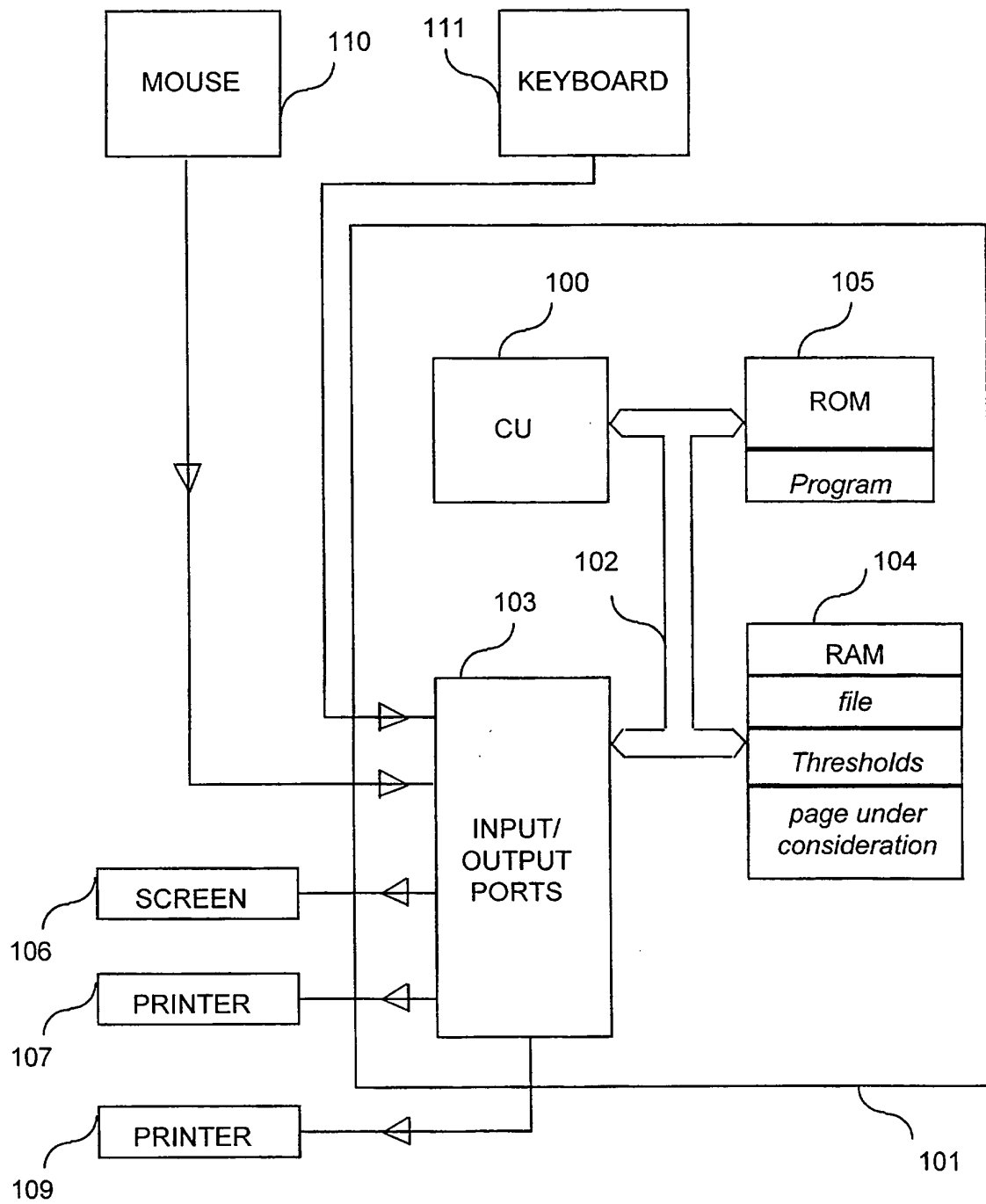


Fig. 1

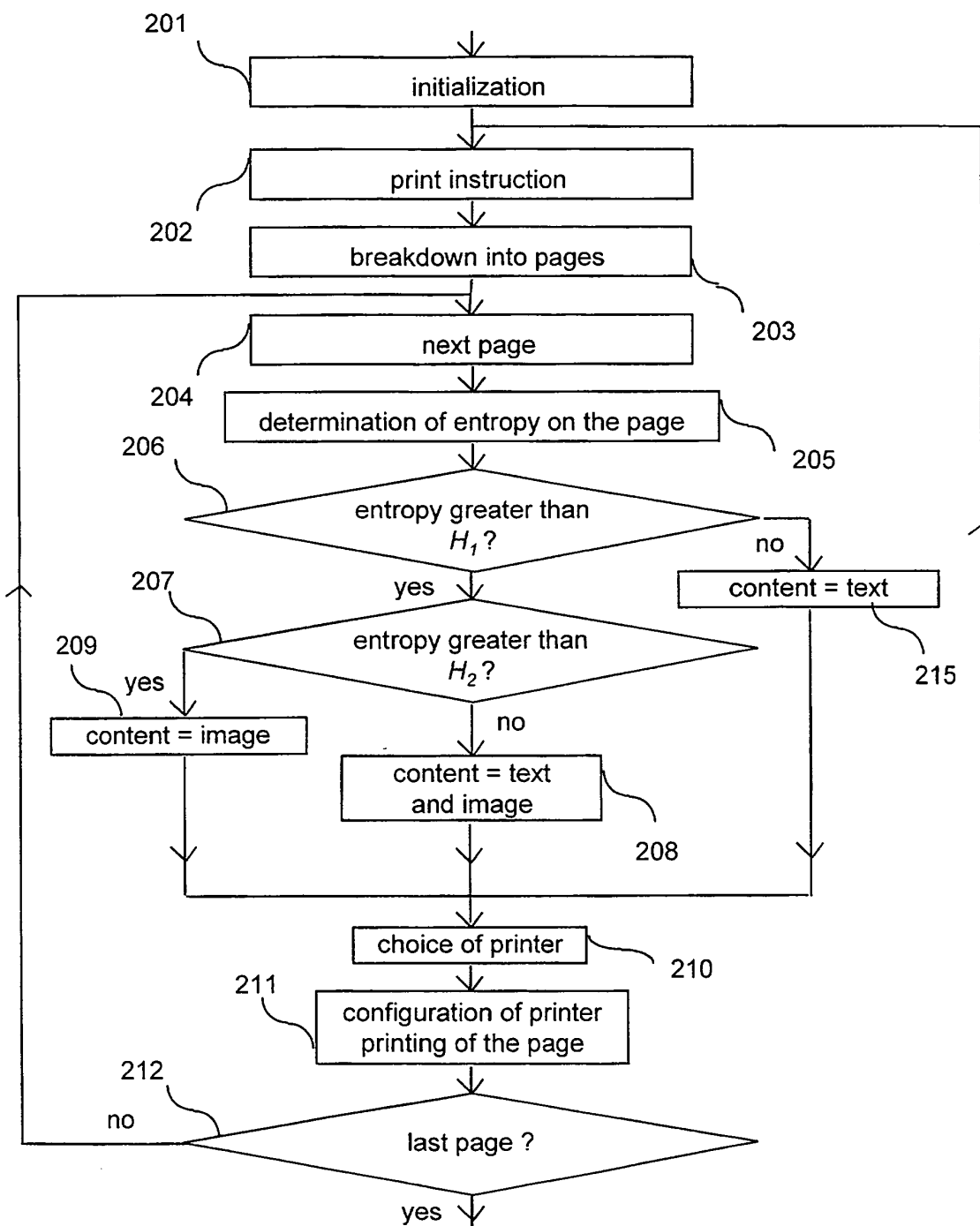


Fig. 2

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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